

Fathers find financial crisis hits family life

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Much coverage of the economic downturn has focussed on its immediate impact, yet it is likely to hold long-term implications for family life. A research study 'Changing Lives and Times' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) at Cardiff University has explored the impact of the financial crisis on the daily lives and future plans of new fathers, finding that several men were making significant life changes.

New dad William described how he and his wife decided to stick with one child rather than have the three children they originally planned for, because they could not afford to do so in the current financial climate. William describes this as an experience shared by others "a friend of mine was definitely having two kids, he's only having one now 'cause when you sit down and look at it, it's really expensive, especially with the recession."

Following men through their partner's [pregnancy](#) and over the first year of fatherhood, the study found that men appeared to be particularly anxious about [money](#). "Our research shows that even in situations where women earn similar or greater amounts than their partners, men often see themselves as responsible for providing financially for their families" says Professor Karen Henwood, who conducted the research.

"In the current climate, where [parents](#) are expected to provide a great deal for their children materially alongside these constrained finances, this led some men to take financial risks so their children did not miss out". The result of these changes sometimes meant men working longer hours or away from the home so they had less time to spend with their

children.

Jeffrey, dad to one year-old Gethin, has had to work away from the family home during the week since the company he works for downsized "It's just annoying 'cause you're not around, especially now 'cause he's starting to stand up and he's almost walking and he's almost talking, you kind of think you're missing out a bit really".

These changes suggest a step backwards for shared parenting, which may become further pressurised in light of recent changes to state support for families. "Our research shows the significant impact of the [recession](#) on middle-income earning men in both the short and longer-term" says Professor Henwood.

Provided by Economic & Social Research Council

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